

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
25 October 2001 (25.10.2001)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 01/80130 A1

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: G06F 17/60

(21) International Application Number: PCT/US01/12071

(22) International Filing Date: 12 April 2001 (12.04.2001)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
60/197,239 14 April 2000 (14.04.2000) US
09/641,418 16 August 2000 (16.08.2000) US

(71) Applicant and

(72) Inventor: STARK, Juergen [US/US]; 930 Vernon Avenue, Glencoe, IL 60022 (US).

(74) Agent: PINE, Jeffrey, A.; Baniak Pine & Gannon, Suite 1200, 150 N. Wacker Drive, Chicago, IL 60606 (US).

(81) Designated States (*national*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW.

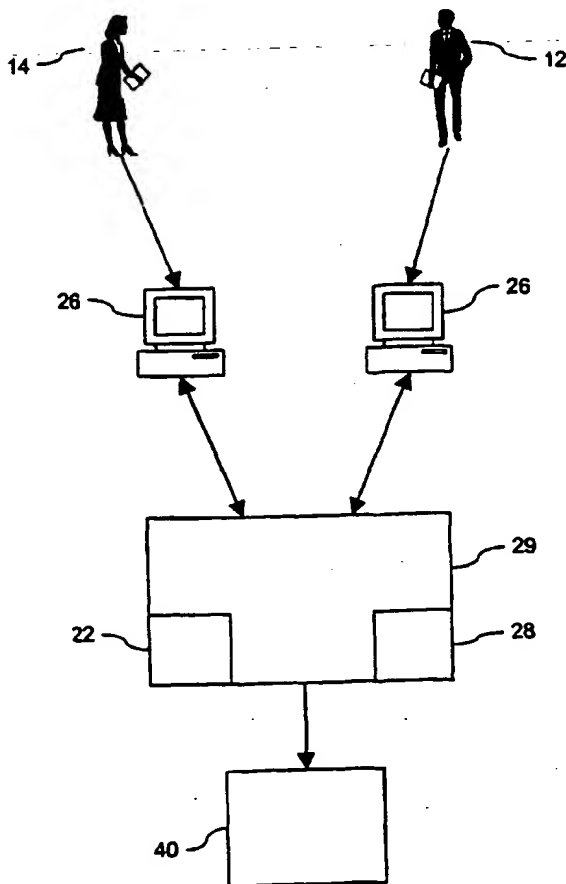
(84) Designated States (*regional*): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

— with international search report

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR A STOCK TRADING CIRCLE



(57) Abstract: A method and system (26) is disclosed whereby a group of individuals is able to share securities trading information, and transact similar trades by creating a stock trading circle, notifying each member of all trading activities of each member, and providing a trade follow up option, which allows each member to make similar stock trades. The platform provides for a stock trading circle in which each member (12, 14) has the information necessary to access that circle, i.e., the name and password, if applicable. When member makes a stock trade (94), the particular information pertaining to that trade is transmitted to the other members, based on their personal profile. Each member then will have the option to make identical or a similar trade.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

WO 01/80130 A1



For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR A STOCK TRADING CIRCLE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

5 The present invention pertains to a communications platform or system that enables a group of individuals to create an interactive stock trading circle whereby securities transaction related information is passed between members of the circle. The information being passed may, for example, concern a specific stock trading transaction that a member has effected, whereby other members of the circle are provided the
10 opportunity to transact similar trades. More specifically, the present invention allows an individual member to automatically and efficiently receive stock trading information from the other individuals who are members of the same stock trading circle and act upon the information received. Members can access a particular stock trading circle if they know the name of the stock trading circle and the corresponding password, if one is
15 utilized in that particular circle. Although the term stock or stock trading is used throughout this document, any security that can be "traded" can be used in the present invention, i.e., stocks, bonds, options, futures, DRIPs, etc.

2. Background of the Invention

20 Many investors are constantly seeking greater returns on their assets and are looking for sources other than their own personal knowledge to base their investment strategies upon. Most consumers base their investment decisions on a number of factors such as the advice of a stockbroker, or based on information obtained during research, including information from books, web sites, business journals, financial statements, news reports, as well as information obtained from other individuals, that are not brokers,
25 but that invest in the stock market. That is why there has been a greater emergence of individuals who rely on the stock trading activities of other non-broker individuals, such as friends, co-workers, and family members as a source for information in their own investing activities.

Many consumers particularly value the advice of a trusted individual because they are often viewed to be reliably more experienced, knowledgeable, and honest about stocks and stock trades, industries, and stock market trends. The trust of another individual can be very valuable to a consumer willing to invest in that such individuals can more easily encourage a person to think about a previously unconsidered sector, company, and/or perspective compared to most investment brokers. Contrasted with the investment information that is easily and readily available on a continuous basis from many different sources, the advice of other trusted individuals is unfortunately difficult to obtain on an ongoing and timely basis.

Such advice is generally available only sporadically, leaving consumers with trading information or advice that is received far too late to take positive advantage of the advice. Although, today individuals can communicate in various ways at a moments notice, including telephone conversation, facsimile transmission, electronic mail, etc., it is still difficult for individuals to maintain close, frequent contact with other trusted individuals with similar trading interests. There is currently no way for individuals to systematically and automatically receive stock investment and trading information from a group of individuals, which they can trust and whose opinion or actions they value.

Thus, it can be appreciated that a need exists for individual investors to create an investment trading group of other similarly situated individuals who can collectively and automatically receive and act on stock (and other securities) trading tips from other individuals within that same group.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is a primary object of the invention to provide an efficient, timely method for sharing stock trading information for purposes of maximizing the trading of stock comprising creating a stock trading circle which includes at least a first and a second stock trading circle member and which may have at least one password associated with the trading circle, transmitting a stock trade activity notification of the first member to at least the second member and then providing the second member an opportunity to make a timely stock trade based upon the stock trade activity notification he received.

It is another object of the invention that the stock trading circle adapt and register a name of the stock trading circle as a web internet site and, if desired, that a password to the website be created and associated with the site to limit access thereof. Access to the site may not be limited, however, a password or other method can be used to ensure that only members can obtain access to the site to review transactions or make changes to the information pertaining to the stock trading circle. Further, even though a web site is used to create and manage the stock trading circle, and the information relating thereto, the control interface may be integrated into existing sites. Further, other devices, such as a personal digital assistant (PDA), lap phones, e-mail messages (or XML messages) may be used to create and manage the stock trading circle.

It is still another object of the present invention that a personal profile of all of the members be created, wherein the personal profiles each comprise at least a contact address for forwarding the stock trade activity notification thereto.

It is still another object of the present invention that the contact address comprise at least one of the following: an email address, a pager number, a cellular telephone number, a facsimile number, an instant messaging address, a work or a home telephone number.

It is yet another object of the present invention to provide the second member an opportunity to make a stock trade based upon the information contained within the stock trade activity notification.

It is yet another object of the present invention to automatically perform a stock trade on behalf of the second member based on his reaction to the stock trade activity notification and the information contained in his personal profile, or at least allow the second member to pass back information which can be used to execute a stock transaction.

It is another object of the present invention that the stock trade activity notification comprises the name of a stock that one of the members has traded and possibly the number of shares of the stock that has been traded, depending on the rules of that particular stock trading circle.

It is yet another object of the present invention that after the stock trading circle has been created at least a second member is provided the name and, if applicable, the password associated with the trading circle. The creator of the stock trading circle, which may or may not be the first member, may manage the trading circle. However, anyone
5 can become the trading circle manager. To the extent that the stock trading circle is resident on another web site, i.e., an existing stock brokerage account, each member of the trading circle may gain access to the trading circle by accessing their personal account on the brokerage site, using their particular login information.

It is yet another object of the present invention that when the second member of
10 the stock trading circle makes a stock trade based on the information contained in the stock trade activity notification, a subsequent stock trade activity notification can be transmitted to the other members of the stock trading circle.

The features and advantages of the invention will be further understood upon
15 consideration of the following detailed description of an embodiment of the invention taken in conjunction with the drawings, in which:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a diagram depicting an embodiment of the system of the present
invention;

20 Figure 2 is a diagram depicting an example of a member to broker transaction being performed according to the method of the present invention;

Figure 3 is flow chart describing the method of creating a stock trading circle, making a stock trade and then passing that information within the circle;

25 Figure 4 is flow chart describing the method of a new member entering the stock trading circle;

Figure 5 is flow chart describing the method of information being passed to another member, with that member making a stock trade based on the information passed; and

30 Figure 6 is a stock trading activity notification message used in connection with the trading circle.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

The present invention is a platform that enables a group of individuals to share stock trading information and transact similar trades based on that shared information. The specific components to the invention as described in more detail below are: the trading circle creation, the trading activity notification, and the trade following option.

Figure 1 is a diagram showing the preferred embodiment of the stock trading circle. Figure 2 shows a block diagram of an alternative embodiment of the stock trading circle. Although these figures describe the preferred embodiment, it should be understood that there are a number of different ways in which to accomplish the stock trading circle. For example, figure 1 shows an individual 12 utilizing a computer 26 to access the stock trading circle in accordance with the present invention. However, instead of utilizing a computer to access the stock trading circle, a cellular telephone, or any of a number of communication devices may be used.

Further as described below, instead of having a stock trading circle that automatically transmits a transaction to a stock broker or stock brokerage firm, the stock brokerage firm may provide an ability for individuals to create a stock trading circle on that firm's web site, thus when trade information is entered into the firm's web site, other members are automatically notified and allowed to make a follow up trade.

The stock trading circle 10 of the present invention is created when an individual 12, either an initiator or a first stock trading circle member (these could be the same person, although not necessarily), either registers a domain name or URL in order to create a stock trading circle web site 20, or creates a stock trading circle on a previously existing web site. For example, the initiator 12 may registers the URL acmetradingcircle.com, which will be the web site address for the Acme Trading Circle. The initiator may design a web site associated with acmetradingcircle.com. Thus, whenever a member of the Acme Trading Circle wishes to make a stock trade, they need only access the web site and enter their trade information. The other members of the trading circle will automatically be notified of the trade activity and be allowed to make a follow up trade.

Accessing the web site can be accomplished in a number of ways besides using a computer 26. A member 14 can access the web site via wired and wireless telephones, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), certain television sets, etc. As describe below, the stock trading circle does not necessarily need to reside on a web site. Once the stock trading circle is established (for example on a stock brokerage firm account) a member 14 may enter a stock trade via a cellular telephone, and in accordance with the present invention, all of the other members of the trading circle will be apprised of the trade activity.

A stock trading circle may also reside within a corporation's web site, such as a stock brokerage firm web site, or on an existing web site, such as one specifically created to enable the creation and management of a trading circle, although any web site can be utilized for this purpose. In the case of a stock brokerage firm's web site, the stock trading circle can be set up such that it must be accessed from within the web site, i.e., a member accesses that firm's web site and then enters information to access the stock trading circle.

However, the stock trading circle need not be structured as such. The stock trading circle may merely be a list of members (and each member's profile as discussed herein) incorporated into the brokerage firm's database such that when any of the members of a particular stock trading circle makes a transaction with that stock brokerage firm, each of the other members will be notified (in accordance with the rules of the stock trading circle and each members profile). Each member will then be allowed to make a follow up trade.

The initiator may also assign a password 22 to that trading circle 10. The password will prevent non-members from obtaining access to the stock trading circle. As an example, the Acme Trading Circle web site may have the password "heart." Thus if a non-member visits the web site but does not know the password, he will not be able to access other pages of the Acme Trading Circle web site, nor will the non-member be able to access information that may be stored on the stock trading circle web site, such as the history of trades for that stock trading circle, each member's profile, etc.

The information pertaining to a particular stock trading circle, i.e., the members of that stock trading circle, each trading circle member's profile, the rules for that particular trading circle, the web site program incorporating that trading circle, any relevant passwords, etc., is stored in memory 28. The preferred embodiment utilizes the Internet
5 29 and the method of storage used therein, as understood by one having ordinary skill in the art.

The initiator 12 distributes the stock trading circle domain name and the corresponding password, if one is being used, for that trading circle to those individuals that he or she wants to become members of that particular trading circle. These
10 additional individuals are known as the invitees or the second, third, fourth, etc., stock trading circle members 14. Although there can be multiple invitees, for purposes of this disclosure, the term member or second stock trading member 14 will be in reference to all of invitees in a collective sense. In certain situations, the term member 14 may
15 specifically refer to an individual, second member. It should be understood that there may be as little as two members in the stock trading circle, but no limit to the number of members (assuming the system can support the high end number).

The members 14 that agree to join the stock trading circle, once they have the necessary information, then access the stock trading circle web site and register themselves to join that particular trading circle. Members 14 may register themselves to
20 join the circle at any time after its creation, and additional individuals can be invited to join the circle at any time.

During the member's 14 registration, each invitee or member 14 of the circle creates a personal profile 24 of himself (if the initiator 12 is also a member of the stock trading circle, the initiator 12 should have already created his own personal profile). This
25 personal profile includes information such as the type of communication device 26, at which the member 14 should be contacted (i.e., electronic mail, pager, fax machine, home computer, work computer, instant messaging address, home phone, work phone, cellular phone, etc.) and the corresponding addresses or numbers to activate these

communication devices 26. Figure 1 illustrates a computer 26 as the communication device, although any form of communication device is envisioned.

5 Additional information can be included in a personal portfolio 24, such as a member's list of stocks that he owns and how many shares of each stock, otherwise known as his stock portfolio, and a member's stock brokerage account information. The amount of information provided to the stock trading circle will depend on the rules of each circle. Once the personal profiles 24 of each member are established, trading information can be transmitted between the members of that particular trading circle 10. The stock trading circle is a dynamic system that allows for the addition of new members at any time. Of course, the rules of the stock trading circle may prohibit new members or limit the number of new members.

15 Although the preferred embodiment of the stock trading circle comprises a separate password protected web site, containing its own URL, an alternative embodiment would be for an existing web site to allow the creation of stock trading circles on that particular web site. For example, a stock brokerage firm, with an existing web site that its customers use to get, among other information, various information about their account, would allow its customers to create their own stock trading circles, passwords and all. Thus when a customer makes a stock trade on their web site, the information can be automatically transmitted, as described below, to other members of that stock trading circle. Further, using a stock brokerage firm to accomplish the stock trading circle obviates the need for a specific web site. Instead, once pertinent information is provided to the manager of the circle (in this example the stock brokerage firm) then whenever a member makes a stock trade, the other members will be notified of the trade in accordance with the rules of that stock trading circle.

25 The advantage of a brokerage firm providing the ability to create stock trading circles on its web site is to attract customers to use its brokerage services, since these customers wish to set up a stock trading circle. Further, if the stock trading circle rules obligate any member of that stock trading circle to use that particular brokerage service, the brokerage service will increase its customer base.

Similar to the procedures described above, an initiator, whether a member of the stock trading circle or not, sets up a stock trading circle on the stock brokerage web site, along with an associated password. The initiator then passes the stock trading circle information and password to potential members. The members register by entering their personal profile 24. Now the stock trading circle is established.

Figures 3 through 5 show the flow charts in accordance with the preferred embodiment of the present invention. As described herein, there are many ways in which the present invention can be accomplished and members of the stock trading circle will be apprised when another member makes a stock trade.

The transmission of trading activity information is executed through standardized trading activity notification messages 30, which are created automatically when a member makes a stock trade 32, i.e., buys or sells a certain number of shares of a particular company, on the stock trading circle web site, or with the particular stock brokerage firm that the stock trading circle is set up with. When a member 14 makes a trade 32 and enters the stock trade information into the web site (or makes a trade with a stock brokerage firm 40), a standardized trading activity notification message 30, an example is shown in figure 6, is transmitted automatically to each member of the trading circle. The information that accompanies the trading activity notification message 30 is determined by the rules of the trading circle, i.e., the members 14 of the circle, and may include the member's name, the date and time, the ticker symbol, the price for which the stock was purchase or sold, the rationale for the trade, etc. The rules of the circle will determine what information is included in the notification 30.

As an example, if a stock trading circle member enters the web site and places an order to sell 200 shares of IBM stock with his stock broker or stock brokerage firm 40, because technology stock are no longer in favor, the trade information is sent to the broker or firm 40 for the trade to be executed, 36, 38. Then, a trading activity notification message 30 is automatically generated and sent 42, 44 to each of the members registered to that stock trading circle. The message may or may not include the

number of shares traded, and the rationale, if the trading circle is configured to transmit that information.

5 The stock trading activity notification message, containing the stock trade information, is transmitted to the other members 14 of the trading circle 10, where they are contacted through the devices and methods based on each member's personal profile 24. For example, if one member indicated in his personal profile that a trading activity notification message 30 should be sent to him via electronic mail to his home computer, then when another member makes a stock trade and enters that information into the trading circle web site, the appropriate trading activity notification message 30 will be
10 forwarded to the first member through his home computer via electronic mail.

Each trading circle member 14 will receive the same message via the device 26 indicated in the personal profile 24 of that particular member. Each member of the trading circle will receive the identical information concerning each trade. It should be understood that there may be certain limitations depending on the particular device 26.
15 However, with the advent of text to voice software, etc. a trade activity message 30 could be generated and sent to any telephone, facsimile machine, etc.

Further, each member 14 has the ability to revise his personal profile 24, and in particular revise the communication device where stock trading notification messages are sent, at any time. Thus, if a member's personal profile 24 provides for information to be sent to his office facsimile machine, and that member wants any stock trading activity notification messages to go to his electronic mail, he can change his personal profile 24 to reflect that change.
20

When a member of the stock trading circle 10 makes a trade, and each of the other stock trading circle members receives a trading activity notification message 30 pertaining to the trade 46. Then each recipient of the message 30 is queried as to whether that member 14 would like to execute a similar trade 48. If the stock trading circle rules permit, the trade information is stored into memory 59 (figure 4 shows the information stored if the member declines to make a similar trade, however, the information can be stored regardless of the members response to the message 30).
25

For example, if one member sells 400 shares of IBM stock, the other members will receive a trading activity notification message 30 indicating the sale of the IBM stock by that member. The notification message is designed to have the recipient members respond to a prompt on the message notification that queries whether the member wishes to make the same trade (or another trade). If the member recipient responds in the affirmative (by entering a "Yes" response 50), an identical trade may be enacted. Also, that member may be prompted to enter certain information (such as the number of shares to sell 52, or a confirmation/password number). When the required information is completed by the member receiving the message 30, the trade order will automatically be transmitted 54 to the trading circle broker 40. The broker 40 then makes the trade 56 either by a manual or an automatic system.

Similar to the previous transaction where a stock trading notification message 30 is delivered to the other members, the trading circle can be configured such that a new stock trading notification message 30 is delivered to each of the other members confirming that another member has responded to the trading opportunity 58.

Before any trade is completed, the trading circle may access the information contained in the member's personal profile 24 in order to compare the requested trade with the order. Accordingly, a member cannot trade stock that he does not have, or purchase stock without sufficient funds to cover the purchase. This improvement may be utilized in some circles (by requiring that members place their stock portfolios into their personal profiles), while other circles may decide against disclosing this much information.

As mentioned earlier, information concerning trading activity is established through the creation of the trade activity notification message 30, which is a standardized messaging format that the trading circle members establish. Depending upon the agreement of the group, the type and amount of information disclosed about the trading activity depends totally on the desires of the group. Any type of information pertaining to the trade of any security can be included or excluded. For example, one trading circle

group may decide that when any member makes a stock trade, all of the information about the trade is sent to each of the other members, like the stock ticker, the number of shares bought or sold, the price at which the stock was sold or purchased. Other groups may decide that most of the information concerning a trade should not be disseminated, other than the type of stock, i.e., common or preferred, and the company name, and whether the stock was bought or sold.

Trading circles could also define rules about sharing the upside of good trading tips. For example, if one member of the circles initiates a specific purchase and later the sale of that same stock, the trading circle may agree that a small percentage of each member's gain will be given to the stock trade initiating member as a reward for making a good trade.

As described above, the stock trading circle 10 can limit access to their stock trading circle 10 by instituting a password driven security and entry system. In this way, uninvited guests are prevented from gaining confidential trading information. For example, should a party learn of the trading circle name and wish to enter the circle, he would be first required to undergo the series of security steps illustrated in the flow chart of Figure 5.

Initially, the party trying to access the trading circle 60, whether a member or not, would be first prompted to enter the correct password 62. Those parties who are current members will have already been provided with the password, and once it is correctly entered 64, they are free to gain access 66 to all confidential trading information of the trading circle and to trade within the trading circle 10. Those parties who do not know the password, or those members who cannot remember the password, will be denied access 68.

The stock trading circle described above was described utilizing a HTML communications platforms that is readily understood by those having ordinary skill in the art. However, the stock trading circle can be greatly enhanced by using a specialized XML communications platform, for example of the type available by the Centerpost Corporation.

When the novel Centerpost communications platform is used in conjunction with the present invention, a stock trading consumer can receive, store, synthesize and intelligently process XML-based electronic messages and standard SMTP email from corporations, such as stock brokerage firms, or any other senders in a way that fully integrates existing email boxes, cell phones, pagers, fax machines, telephones, and other devices so that these devices can communicate with each other from a common platform.

The Centerpost platform contains standardized XML-tags that enable the platform to understand the nature of the message and to either forward, copy, format, convert, store, consolidate, summarize, or stop the communications accordingly. The platform utilizes XML tags that can describe such things as the message immediacy, reach, and the sensitivity of the communication, all of which are important in the stock brokerage industry. Furthermore, the trading circle can send the trading activity notifications as pre-coded or "smart" messages which the platform will automatically determine how to display, summarize, and process.

More importantly, by incorporating the present invention with a communications platform like the Centerpost platform, the trading members only need to define a personal Centerpost address as the destination for all stock trading activity notification messages. The Centerpost platform is capable of routing the notification messages to the stock trading circle members at an endpoint, which they feel is best to contact them, such as a personal digital assistant, rather than at their email address.

Another advantage of using an established platform like the Centerpost communications platform is that its web site allows the incorporation of information folios that organize the trading information that a member receives. These information folios can intelligently store, display, and synthesize incoming trading messages, with the folios being organized into "activities" and "events", both of which are definable by the members. The "events" apply to trading activities and the "activities" can include for example another trading circle member's stock pick, while an event may be the follow on a trade of 200 shares of the same stock executed by the account holder. Events

essentially post to an activity and update the activity status based on the definition set by the sender.

5 Folios enable complex, detailed information to be automatically organized and summarized based on open, flexible, sender-defined requirements. Once given basic instructions, the platform can organize the trading messages, retrieve them, alert a trading member when an important messages has arrived, etc. Also, each member has a variety of communication means in which the other members can make contact.

10 An XML platform, such as Centerpost, can also facilitate each and every aspect of the two-way action initiated based on the outbound messages. For example, the Centerpost XML platform can act as a hub to connect trading circle members across brokerages and send XML transactions back to brokerages in a way that can directly execute a trade.

WE CLAIM:

1. A method of sharing securities trading information, comprising the steps of:

5 creating a stock trading circle, said stock trading circle comprising at least two stock trading members, at least a first stock trading member and at least a second stock trading member;

transmitting a stock trade activity notification from said at least a first stock trading member to said at least a second stock trading member; and

10 providing said at least a second stock trading member an opportunity to effect a stock trade based on said stock trade activity notification of said at least a first stock trading member.

15 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said creating a stock trading circle comprises the step of registering a name for said stock trading circle, said registration of said name being associated with either a new or existing web site.

3. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of generating a personal profile for said at least a first stock trading member and at least a second stock trading member.

20 4. The method of claim 3, wherein said personal profile comprises at least a contact address, said contact address containing information pertaining to where a stock trade activity notification should be sent.

25 5. The method of claim 4, wherein said contact address comprises an endpoint device that is selected from the group consisting of an email address, a pager, a beeper, a cellular telephone, a wireless telephone, a home phone, a personal digital assistant, and a facsimile machine.

6. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of registering a name for said stock trading circle further comprises the step of generating a password associated with said stock trading circle, wherein said password limits the access to the stock trading circle to a stock trading circle member having said password.

5 7. The method of claim 1, wherein said creating a stock trading circle comprises providing said name of the web site to at least said second member.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein said stock trade activity notification comprises at least a name of a stock.

10 9. The method of claim 8, wherein said stock trade activity notification further comprises the number of shares pertaining to said stock to be traded.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein said stock trade activity notification further comprises a rationale for trading said stock to be traded.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein said stock trade activity notification further comprises whether said stock to be traded was bought or sold.

15 12. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of allowing said at least a second stock trading member an opportunity to effect a stock trade based on said stock trade activity notification of said at least a first stock trading member comprises the step of allowing said at least a second stock trading member to respond to said stock trade activity notification.

20 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the step of allowing said at least a second stock trading member to respond to said stock trade activity notification comprises the step of entering affirmatively that a stock is to be traded.

14. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of entering the number of shares of said stock to be traded.

5 15. The method of claim 13, wherein said entering affirmatively that a stock is to be traded comprises entering the number of shares of a stock to be traded, said entering the number of shares to be traded automatically performs the trade of said stock to be traded.

10 16. The method of claim 12, wherein the step of allowing said at least a second stock trading member to respond to said stock trade activity notification comprises transmitting information pertaining to said stock trade activity notification using either a standard Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP) through an electronic mail server, a standard HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP) through a web server, or an XML-based server for electronic messages and electronic mail.

15 17. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of transmitting a stock trade activity notification from said at least a first stock trading member to said at least a second stock trading member comprises using the Internet.

20 18. The method of claim 17, wherein using the Internet comprises transmitting information pertaining to said stock trade activity notification using either a standard Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP) through an electronic mail server, a standard HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP) through a web server, or an XML-based server for electronic messages and electronic mail.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein using the Internet comprises using a message processing hub to connect said at least a first stock trading circle member with said at least a second stock trading circle member.

20. The method of claim 17, wherein using the Internet comprises using a message processing hub to connect said at least a first stock trading circle member with at least one stock brokerage firm.

5 21. The method of claim 17, wherein using the Internet comprises using a web site interface to create and manage said stock trading circle.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein said web site interface comprises drop down menus.

10 23. The method of claim 12, wherein the step of allowing said at least a second stock trading member to respond to said stock trade activity notification further comprises the step of notifying a stock brokerage firm that a stock is to be traded.

24. The method of claim 23, further comprising the step of entering the number of shares of said stock to be traded.

15 25. The method of claim 23, wherein said entering affirmatively that a stock is to be traded comprises entering the number of shares of a stock to be traded, said entering the number of shares to be traded automatically performs the trade of said stock to be traded.

1/6

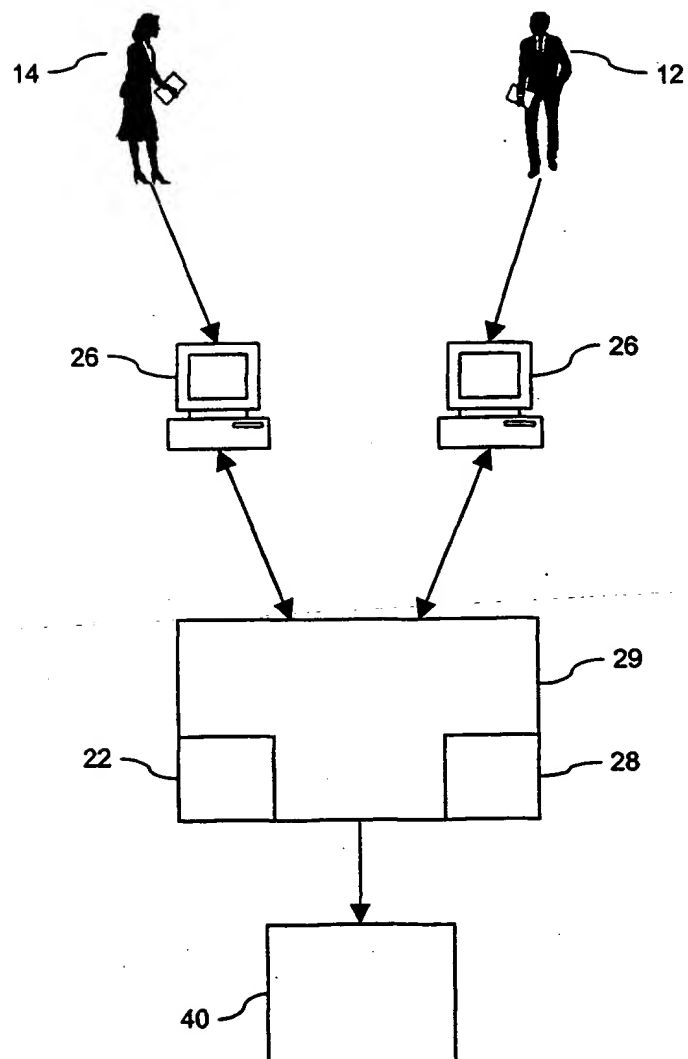


FIG. 1

This Page Blank (uspto)

2/6

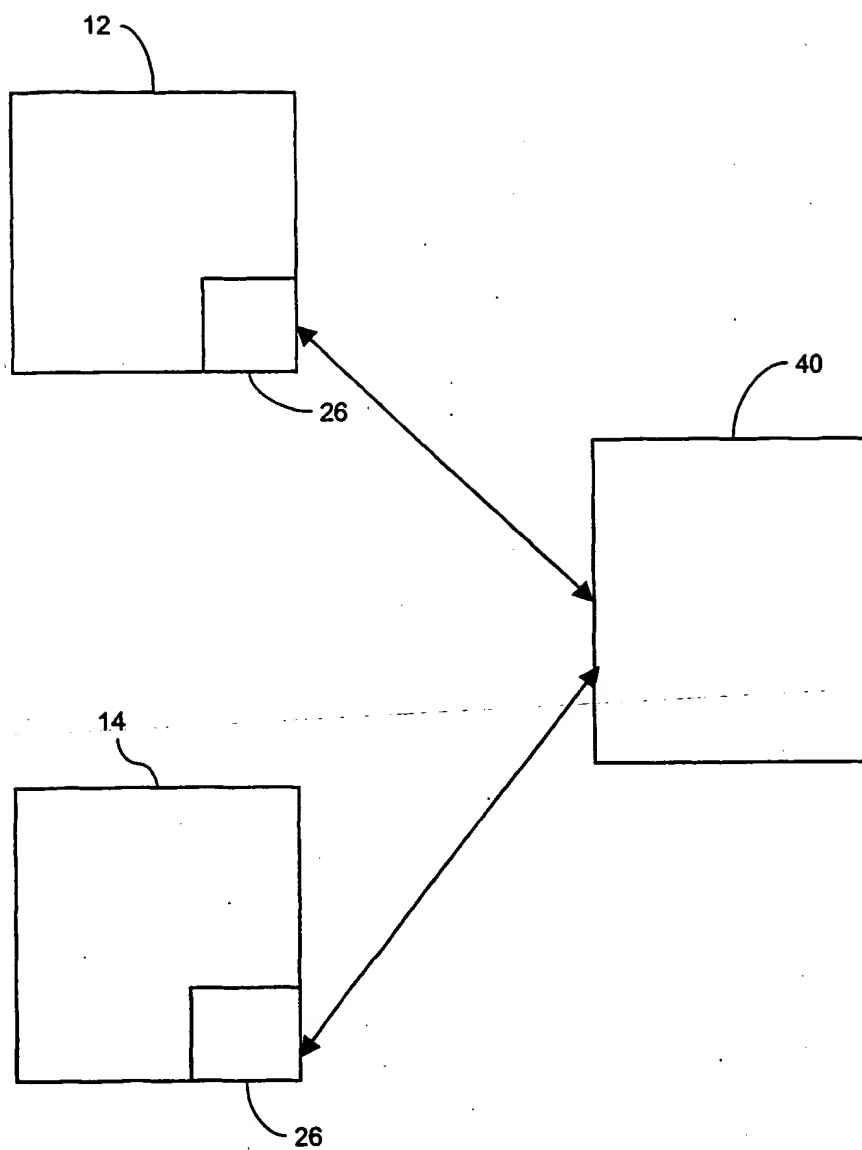


FIG. 2

This Page Blank (uspto)

3/6

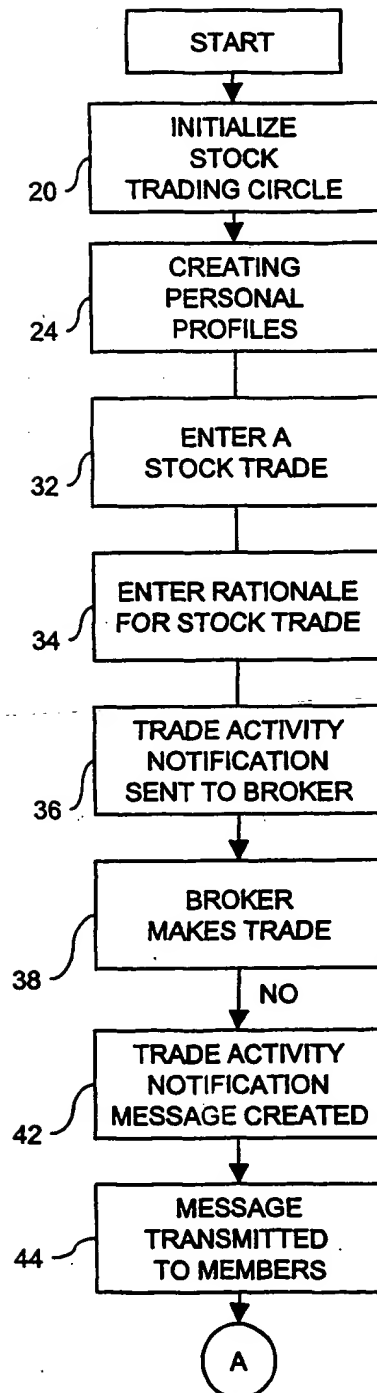
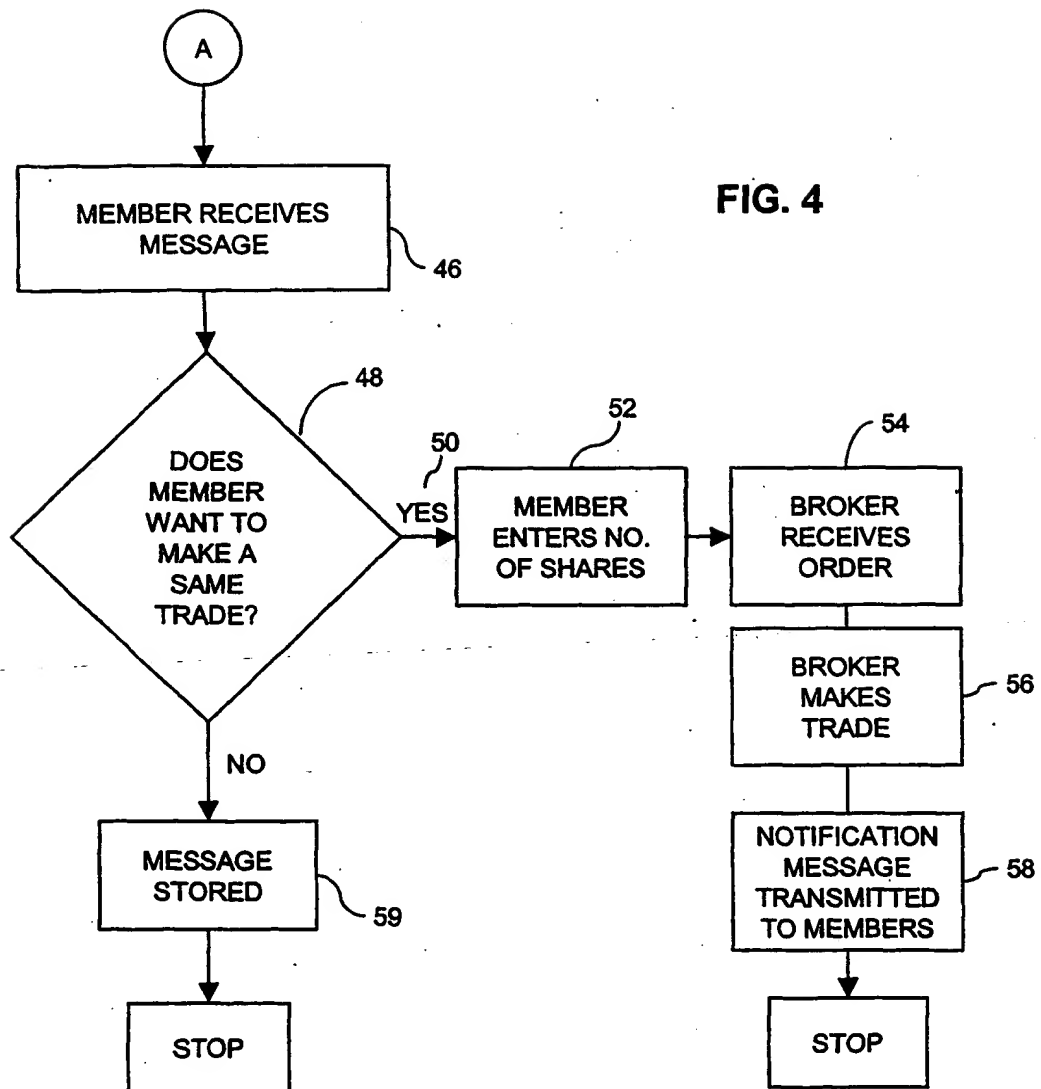


FIG. 3

This Page Blank (uspto)

4/6

FIG. 4



is Page Blank (uspto)

5/6

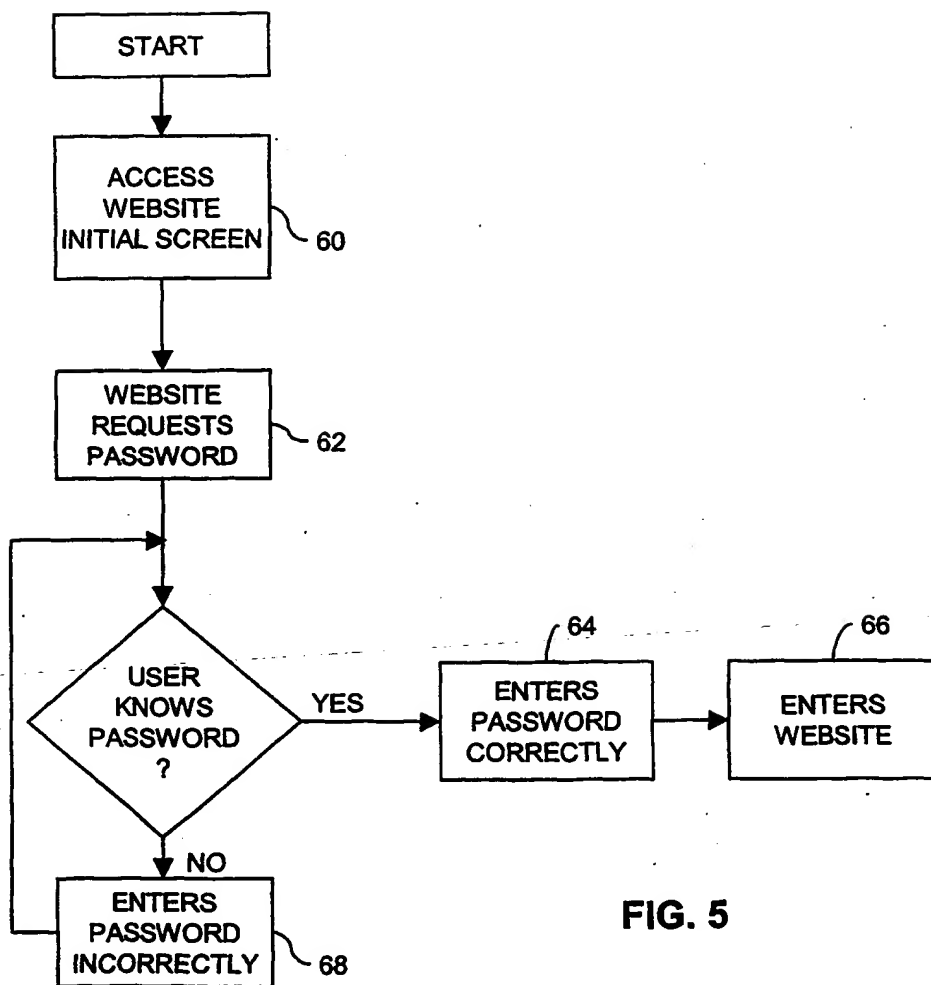


FIG. 5

This Page Blank (uspto)

6/6

STOCK TRADING ACTIVITY NOTIFICATION

ACME TRADING CIRCLE

MEMBER:	JOHN DOE
DATE:	AUGUST 1, 2000
TIME:	11:07 A.M.
TRANSACTION:	SOLD
STOCK:	IBM
SHARES:	200
PRICE:	\$120/Share
RATIONALE:	TECHNOLOGY STOCKS NOT IN FAVOR

30

FIG. 6

This Page Blank (uspto)

**This Page is Inserted by IFW Indexing and Scanning
Operations and is not part of the Official Record**

BEST AVAILABLE IMAGES

Defective images within this document are accurate representations of the original documents submitted by the applicant.

Defects in the images include but are not limited to the items checked:

- ☐ **BLACK BORDERS**
- ☐ **IMAGE CUT OFF AT TOP, BOTTOM OR SIDES**
- ☐ **FADED TEXT OR DRAWING**
- ☐ **BLURRED OR ILLEGIBLE TEXT OR DRAWING**
- ☐ **SKEWED/SLANTED IMAGES**
- ☐ **COLOR OR BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS**
- ☐ **GRAY SCALE DOCUMENTS**
- ☐ **LINES OR MARKS ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT**
- ☐ **REFERENCE(S) OR EXHIBIT(S) SUBMITTED ARE POOR QUALITY**
- ☐ **OTHER:** _____

IMAGES ARE BEST AVAILABLE COPY.

As rescanning these documents will not correct the image problems checked, please do not report these problems to the IFW Image Problem Mailbox.

This Page Blank (uspto)